

for once, finally, finally, finally, finally, finally takes our oceans and coasts seriously.

I get that we are terrestrial mammals, but a lot of us care for our coasts, a lot of us care for our seas, a lot of our economies are dependent on our oceans, and the health of the planet is dependent on the cooling and on the oxygen that oceans provide. So we mess around with our oceans at our peril.

I hope that the Biden administration will take climate change as deadly serious as it needs to be taken and that it will step up a significant step from the degree of attention climate change got in the Obama administration.

We have to recognize the danger to our future if we remain negligent—it is that simple. And we have to make sure we free ourselves from the thrall of the fossil fuel industry's climate denial machine because the fossil fuel industry does not want what is best for America, does not want what is best for people, does not want what is best for oceans and the environment; it wants what is best for its profits, period, and end of story.

So we really, really, really, under the Biden administration, need a serious climate bill to safeguard the oceans on the only planet that we call home.

I yield the floor.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Pennsylvania.

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent to speak as if in morning business.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### CORONAVIRUS

Mr. CASEY. Madam President, I rise today to unfortunately look back with sadness on the deadly toll of COVID-19 this year. I will focus my remarks on my home State of Pennsylvania, but of course the stories that I will relate about individuals we lost—of course many of them could be told in so many other States.

As of today, the middle of today, there have been some 301,264 deaths in the United States due to COVID-19, including 12,890—12,890—deaths in Pennsylvania. While I wish I could recognize and honor the memories of each of those individuals, that recognition, of course, would take longer than I have time set aside on the floor to speak, so instead I will share the stories of just 5 Pennsylvanians who have lost their lives to this terrible disease—5 stories, 5 families, from one corner of our State to the other, east to west, throughout our 67 counties.

#### REMEMBERING WALTER RASICH

The first person I will talk about is Walter Rasich. Walter moved into Whitehall Manor, which is a long-term care facility in Whitehall, PA. That is in Lehigh County, which is on the eastern border of our State, on the border just next to New Jersey, the so-called Lehigh Valley.

Walter moved into that long-term care facility in October of 2019. Wal-

ter's son Andy shared his story with my office.

Walter Rasich was a widower, and he has two sons and two daughters. He was a beloved grandfather to eight and a great-grandfather to seven. He was also an avid toy collector of Matchbox cars. Some of Walter's pastimes were working in the garage, hunting and fishing with his children, and also being with his grandchildren and his great-grandchildren.

Walter retired after 42 years, working as an electrical inspector for the steel industry.

Walter's nursing home locked down when the pandemic hit, and his family, like so many American families, was no longer allowed to visit. On April 20, 2020—that was a Monday—his son received a call that his father was going to the hospital with a fever of 102. Walter's family learned that Walter had passed away on April 24, just 4 days later—Thursday, April 24, 2020. He was 86 years old. They learned that he was the third resident of his nursing home to die of COVID-19.

So we express our condolences to Walter's family.

#### REMEMBERING KARIN PORTER

Karin Porter of Philadelphia spent 35 years as an investigator for the Federal Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, which many know as the EEOC. As many people know, the EEOC is responsible for enforcing Federal anti-discrimination laws in the workplace and protecting workers and job applicants who have faced discrimination.

Karin was from Philadelphia, as I mentioned, and she raised her granddaughter Krystin. According to Krystin, Karin loved to travel. She loved to swim and to dance, and she was an avid shopper. Everyone loved Karin, and she was always the life of the party.

Karin got sick with COVID-19 right after her 69th birthday and died in April of this year.

In remembering her grandmother, Krystin said: "To know her, was to love her." Like so many families, as well, Karin's death was very sudden, and like too many others this year, all across our State and across the country, she has left behind a family in grief as they endure her passing.

So we send our sympathies and condolences to Karin Porter's family.

#### REMEMBERING ALLAN COHEN

Third, we go from one end of our State to the other, from Philadelphia all the way to Pittsburgh, to talk about a third Pennsylvanian. This individual's name was Allan Cohen.

Allan Cohen was a civil rights leader and advocate from Pittsburgh. He was 93 years old when he passed away on July 31 of this year.

Allan spent his life fighting for justice. As a young adult, he traveled to Mississippi to help Black voters to register to vote. He was here in Washington to hear the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s famous "I Have a

Dream" speech in 1963, part of the great March on Washington that year.

Allan was a lawyer. He went to the University of Pittsburgh, both for his undergraduate degree as well as for his law degree. He specialized in "fighting for the underdog," as his son Norman said in Allan's obituary, taking on personal injury cases for blue-collar workers, just by way of one example.

He was also a dedicated family man. Allan Cohen and his wife Lois were married for 66 years. They raised two sons. Allan's wife Lois contracted COVID-19 and has been fortunate to recover. Their family describes this couple as "the perfect match."

In retirement, Allan liked to audit classes at the University of Pittsburgh, his alma mater. He also liked to garden. His son Norm recalled "the best vacations" as a child, including a cross-country road trip. Once Norm and his brother Lawrence were grown up, they would take their father Allan and their mom Lois on vacations, instead, I guess as a way to return the favor for those vacations when they were young.

Allan's family remembers him, of course, as a civil rights advocate and a skilled orator who loved to travel. In the words of his granddaughter Molly, as quoted in his obituary, "What I admire most about my grandpa was his integrity and how he always made things light and fun." Molly went on to say: "When things in the world are unjust, Grandpa always speaks up and does what he can to make a difference."

In addition to his wife, sons, and granddaughter Molly, Allan left behind seven other grandchildren and one great-grandchild. So we are thinking today of Allan Cohen's family and offer our condolences and sympathies.

#### REMEMBERING DR. VICTOR RIVERA

Now we go back to the eastern side of the State, to Bucks County, PA, to talk about Dr. Victor Rivera, who was a retired pediatrician from Langhorne, which is in Bucks County, of course, just north of Philadelphia, very close to the New Jersey border as well.

Dr. Rivera practiced medicine for over 40 years, treating thousands of local children. He volunteered for medical missions and cared for children abroad. He leaves behind a loving family—his wife Mila, four children, and extended family all around the world.

Dr. Rivera was fondly remembered by his community after he died from COVID-19 complications in April of this year. They described Dr. Rivera as a father figure, someone dedicated to his patients but also his staff, who connected with his patients—in the words of one person, "a kind, gentle soul."

In some cases, Dr. Rivera treated multiple generations of the same family. When his patients grew up, they brought their own children back to his care.

Many commented on his big heart, his warm smile, and his "magical" singing voice. Even when he was hospitalized for COVID-19, Dr. Rivera was

singing to the nurses in the intensive care unit and cracking jokes.

After retirement, he kept working shifts. When he wasn't working, he and Mila would travel, and that is how he contracted COVID-19, returning from an international trip just as the pandemic was worsening.

Dr. Rivera, like so many others who have died from COVID-19, leaves a big hole in his community. So we also offer our condolences and sympathies to Dr. Rivera's family.

#### REMEMBERING THEODORE "TED" WATTS

Finally, for the fifth Pennsylvanian whom I will talk about, we go back out to the northwestern end of the State—Northwestern Pennsylvania, Crawford County.

Theodore Watts was known as "Ted." Ted Watts, as he was known, is someone who was born in Pittsburgh, PA, but he spent most of his life in Meadville which, as I mentioned, is in Crawford County, just south of Erie, just to give people the geography.

Ted was a lawyer who first served his country in the JAG Corps of the U.S. Army. After separating from the Army, Ted married Shirley Barnett, and they settled in Meadville, PA, where Ted went into private practice.

Ted also served as the solicitor for the Penncrest School District and served as the Crawford County solicitor and the legal representative for the housing authority and the water authority of Meadville in Crawford County.

One of his most significant professional accomplishments came through his time as an attorney for the redevelopment authority, during which time he helped to set the stage for future "brownfields" legislation to safely reclaim contaminated industrial sites.

Ted is remembered by his family, friends, and colleagues for being community-oriented, a mentor, and someone who would "do anything," as someone said, for the people he cared most about.

He was an avid runner, finishing more than 40 marathons, and was the power behind the Thurston Classic, a large hot air balloon rally.

Ted loved the Pittsburgh Steelers, holding season tickets, and was both an athlete and a great coach for soccer and a referee for football.

Ted passed away from complications of COVID-19 in October of this year and leaves behind an extended family, as well as many people in Meadville and Crawford County whose lives he touched through his years of public service.

We, of course, offer our condolences and sympathies to Ted's family.

Let me say in conclusion that the Pennsylvanians whose stories I shared today are, of course, just a fraction—a fraction—of the now 12,890 deaths in our Commonwealth. Sadly, given the current rate at which the virus is spreading nationwide and in our State, the death toll will only rise higher in the coming weeks and months. On a

day like today—and, I hope, on so many other days—we pray for the grieving families who have loved and lost. They have lost someone they were very close to, someone they cared about, someone who brought joy to their lives, someone whom they will miss.

I am reminded again of the great song by Bruce Springsteen, "You're Missing." He wrote it after 9/11, and it has application, of course, to all kinds of circumstances where someone lost a loved one—lost a loved one in 9/11, lost a loved one in Iraq or Afghanistan or in so many other tragedies. In this case, I will use it to talk about what these families have lost because of this terrible virus and the COVID-19 pandemic. I won't recite, of course, all the lyrics, but Bruce Springsteen, in the song "You're Missing" has a refrain:

You're missing when I shut out the lights  
You're missing when I close my eyes  
You're missing when I see the sun rise

He goes on to sing the rest of the song about a person missing.

All of these families will miss their loved ones, not only when they are shutting off the lights and when they rise in the morning but every day and, in many cases, every hour of every day. So we pray for them.

And I think we have an obligation ourselves to these families. To honor those we have lost, we must all do our part.

What does that mean? It means following public health guidance regarding social distancing, wearing masks, and other steps we can all take, each of us, to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and to save as many lives as possible until the vaccines are widely available.

Let's do what we can. Of course, we should express condolences and sympathy. Of course, we should pray for an end to this terrible scourge. But we all have an obligation to do more to get those death numbers down.

But I wanted, in some small way, to recognize these Pennsylvanians, representative of all 12,890, which we pray will not grow very much from that number, just to say a word about the lives they lived and the families they left behind.

May God bless all of them.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. CASSIDY). The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that our vote begin now.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### VOTE ON KIRSCH NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, all postcloture time is expired.

The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Kirsch nomination?

Ms. BALDWIN. Mr. President, I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk called the roll.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Nebraska (Mrs. FISCHER), the Senator from Georgia (Mrs. LOEFFLER), the Senator from Georgia (Mr. PERDUE), and the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO).

Further, if present and voting, the Senator from Florida (Mr. RUBIO) would have voted "yea."

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Ms. HARRIS) is necessarily absent.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. SASSE). Are there any other Senators in the Chamber desiring to vote?

The result was announced—yeas 51, nays 44, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 266 Ex.]

#### YEAS—51

Alexander	Ernst	Paul
Barrasso	Gardner	Portman
Blackburn	Graham	Risch
Blunt	Grassley	Roberts
Boozman	Hawley	Romney
Braun	Hoeben	Rounds
Burr	Hyde-Smith	Sasse
Capito	Inhofe	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Johnson	Scott (SC)
Collins	Kelly	Shelby
Cornyn	Kennedy	Sinema
Cotton	Lankford	Sullivan
Cramer	Lee	Thune
Crapo	Manchin	Tillis
Cruz	McConnell	Toomey
Daines	Moran	Wicker
Enzi	Murkowski	Young

#### NAYS—44

Baldwin	Hassan	Rosen
Bennet	Heinrich	Sanders
Blumenthal	Hirono	Schatz
Booker	Jones	Schumer
Brown	Kaine	Shaheen
Cantwell	King	Smith
Cardin	Klobuchar	Stabenow
Carper	Leahy	Tester
Casey	Markey	Udall
Coons	Menendez	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Warner
Duckworth	Murphy	Warren
Durbin	Murray	Whitehouse
Feinstein	Peters	Wyden
Gillibrand	Reed	

#### NOT VOTING—5

Fischer	Loeffler	Rubio
Harris	Perdue	

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

#### CLOTURE MOTION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Pursuant to rule XXII, the Chair lays before the Senate the pending cloture motion, which the clerk will state.

The bill clerk read as follows:

#### CLOTURE MOTION

We, the undersigned Senators, in accordance with the provisions of rule XXII of the